



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Committee of the Whole

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Mayor James L. Streeter, Councilors Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Paulann H. Sheets, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, February 9, 2010

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

SPECIAL MEETING - REVISED

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Streeter called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Streeter, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro and Councilor O'Beirne, Jr.

Members Absent: Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Watson

Also present was Town Manager Mark Oefinger.

3. Calendar and Communications

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

2010-0025 Approval of Minutes (Committee of the Whole)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council Committee of the Whole meetings of January 6, 2010 and January 12, 2010 are hereby accepted and approved.

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., to adopt.

The motion carried unanimously

5. NEW BUSINESS

Councilors Sheets and Watson arrived.

Members Present: Mayor Streeter, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Sheets and Councilor Watson

Members Absent: Councilor Peruzzotti

2010-0021 Labor Negotiations (2010 Standing Referral)

A motion was made by Mayor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, that the members of the Town Council, together with Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Director of Administrative Services Doug Ackerman, and Manager of Labor Relations Joyce Sauchuk go into executive session at 6:01 p.m. for the purpose of discussing strategy and/or negotiations with respect to current and pending collective bargaining with multiple bargaining units. This action is taken without prejudice to the Council's right to discuss these matters in a private meeting pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §1 200(2).

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed

The executive session ended at 6:42 p.m.

A motion was made by Mayor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, to recommend a resolution authorizing amendments to the agreement providing pensions for members of Local 818 of Council #4, AFSCME, as follows:

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton Code of Ordinances, Division 2 - Retirement System of Chapter 2 -

Administration of Article IV - Officer and Employees contains the following section:

Sec. 2-76 Amendments

Upon recommendation of the town manager retirement benefits for employees of the town covered by this division may be increased by resolution of the Town Council.

WHEREAS, the Town Manager recommends amendments to the Agreement Providing for Pensions for Members of Local 818 of Council #4, AFSCME as set forth in the attached 2010 Retirement Incentive Program Description for Members of Local 818 of Council #4, AFSCME; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has considered the recommendation of the Town Manager and the cost estimates provided by the Town's actuaries regarding the 2010 Retirement Incentive Program Description for Members of Local 818 of Council #4, AFSCME, it is hereby

RESOLVED, that pursuant to the recommendation of the Town Manager, the Agreement Providing for Pensions for Members of Local 818 of Council #4, AFSCME is amended as set forth in the 2010 Retirement Incentive Program Description for Members of Local 818 of Council #4, AFSCME.

The motion carried unanimously

2009-0248

FYE 2011 Budget

Discussed

Departmental Budget and Other Account Review with:

- Town Clerk
- Police
- Parks and Recreation
- Library

Discussion of Budget Review Calendar

This item continues discussions with department heads regarding their FYE 2011 budget submissions. The intent is to provide some background information to the Town Council. The department heads have been asked to submit to the Town Manager level service budgets with two scenarios: a 0% increase and a 5% reduction. Both scenarios would require personnel reductions. The Town Manager noted that Betty Anne Reiter from the Library was unable to attend the meeting.

Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher distributed information to the Council on the Town Clerk's adopted FYE 2010 budget and her FYE 2011 request. The decrease is due mainly to a difference in the new and former Town Clerks' salaries. Budgets for professional development, utilities (caller ID), Citizenship Day, and typewriter maintenance were decreased to achieve a 0% increase budget. A 5% reduction would mean personnel and would affect level of service. A 5% reduction equates to approximately \$20,000. Currently there are four full-time positions and one part-time position. Despite the downturn in the economy, there is no staff down time due to a backlog of work. The impact of the economic slowdown on filing revenues is estimated to be about \$70,000 over last year's figures. The economy has also has impacted licenses. Copy revenues are up. The Town Clerk will attend the spring and fall conferences of the Connecticut Clerk's Association and forego the national conference. Councilor Flax asked about alternatives for conducting business with the Town Clerk and Ms. Moukawsher noted that mail and the internet are already utilized.

Councilor Peruzzotti arrived.

Roll Call: Members Present: Mayor Streeter, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Watson

Discussed

important services for the Town results in a 3.3% increase request. The largest increase is associated with contractual salary increases (70% of the increase), followed by vehicle replacement/maintenance and fuel costs (20%). There is also a shift premium increase (5%). The Chief has reduced the overtime request and eliminated an office clerk's position in the Detective Division.

A 0% increase would mean a \$215,000 decrease. Most costs in the Police budget are personnel costs. Operating costs have already been significantly reduced and refined over the years. A 0% or 5% reduction would be personnel reductions. At 0%, the community policing program positions would be eliminated. The goal in reducing positions is to preserve reactive, traditional, police services and would involve all divisions. Chief Fogg reviewed the past plan to add a total of six officers to reduce replacement overtime costs; only two positions have been added. The department is looking at 2 to 2½ positions and a K-9 position to reach 0%. To reach a 5% reduction, the department would eliminate the K-9 program and another 5 positions.

Chief Fogg responded to a number of questions from Councilors. One officer is starting training next week and one is currently at the academy. Eliminating positions would increase overtime costs. There has been no significant increase in workload as a result of the economy. There would be no impact on response times at 0%, only on backfill overtime costs. College incentive pay is required by union contract. The police officer at the high school is no longer reimbursed by the Board of Education. Chief Fogg reviewed funding for the DARE program. The cost for supplies is about \$8,000. The real costs are in personnel (two youth officers to run the program). Discussion followed on the use of overtime and how overtime is impacted by additional officer positions. A few officers are close to retirement, but most retirements have occurred during the last five to six years. The networking officer, bicycle patrols, targeted enforcement, motor vehicle enforcement team, and DARE program are considered proactive programs. Chief Fogg described the cell phone enforcement process and associated ticket revenue and court costs. The Town currently has the minimum number of officers per shift that Chief Fogg would recommend for safety reasons.

Director of Parks and Recreation John Silsby distributed information to the Council. The General Fund budget for Parks and Recreation level service is slightly over a 2% increase. Fleet replacement costs account for half of the increase. Mr. Silsby is requesting a senior programming account increase due to opening of new Senior Center. A 0% increase would be a \$47,000 reduction and a 5% reduction would be an additional \$120,000. In FYE 2010, \$100,000 of direct and indirect costs were shifted to the special revenue fund. A 0% increase impacts programs and facilities and results in elimination of community events including the fireworks unless community sponsors could be found; the summer playground schedule is shortened by one week; a piece of replacement equipment is eliminated; overtime would be eliminated, impacting community activities and weekend maintenance; and a part-time food service worker would be shifted to the special revenue fund.

To get to a 5% reduction, the July 4th parade would be eliminated; replacement costs eliminated; training costs reduced; part-time bus drivers moved to the special revenue fund; a building monitor at the Senior Center eliminated impacting evening programs; and two full time positions eliminated. No additional full-time personnel are planned for the new senior center, only contractual program employees for evening programs. The cost of those contractual programs would not be covered entirely by fees. Mr. Silsby described senior transportation programs. All programs are also covered by a scholarship program, especially the summer playground program. Excluding the Senior Center programs, the only programs still in the General Fund are Summer Playground and Special Needs.

The Golf Course budget for FYE 2011 is an enterprise fund arrangement. The increase of 2.6% over the current year budget is necessary to deal with significant increases in health insurance

and retirement costs. The operating portion of the budget has been reduced potentially impacting the course. Fleet replacement costs are also high. The proposed financing plan produces a fund balance. A 0% reduction would impact turf care, customer service, and pro-shop hours; eliminate a seasonal maintenance employee; reduce overtime impacting play conditions on the weekends; reduce the marketing budget; and result in major cuts to turf care products and irrigation. Any further reductions would require elimination of a full-time employee. A 5% reduction would create a very difficult situation and require closing the course for a portion of the year.

The Town Manager noted that he is developing the budget review schedule and there is a potential conflict the week of school vacation. Councilor Sheets indicated she will be away the weekend of April 17th.

2010-0035 Land Acquisition - Merritt Property

Discussed

Director of Parks and Recreation John Silsby noted that he was approached by a member of the Merritt family offering to sell to the Town 7+ acres of property off Route 1. The property used to have a garden on it and the Community Garden could be located there. The potential of the parcel for open space is under review by Planning. Mr. Silsby noted that the state has a grant program for open space acquisition with a deadline of May 3rd. The grant would pay 75% of the cost of the acquisition. There are access considerations and wetlands issues, and the property would need to be cleared. This parcel is not on the Conservation Commission's list of property for potential acquisition. Councilor O'Beirne suggested that this item be referred to the Conservation Commission. Town Manager Oefinger explained that he wanted to make the Council aware of the offer to determine if further referrals/research should be done. He provided a brief overview and history of the property. The Town Manager noted that the Town has funds set aside for open space acquisition that could be used for the 25% Town match. Councilor Watson indicated he would like to walk the site. Mayor Streeter referred the issue to the Conservation Commission.

2010-0026 Terms and Conditions of Town Clerk Employment

A motion was made by Mayor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, to enter executive session at 8:16 p.m. to discuss terms and conditions of Town Clerk employment and to invite the Town Clerk to attend.

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed

The executive session concluded at 8:36 p.m.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.